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ABSTRACT

A survey was done to assess whether institutions of higher education are recognizing the contributions made by their faculty who are teaching in adult/continuing education and extension programs by integrating these services into the institution's faculty evaluation and reward system. The administrations from over 170 private and public universities and colleges located in forty-four states were surveyed to gather information on how administrations evaluate faculty community service in considering academic promotion, reappointment, and tenure. The survey results indicated that at the majority of universities (1) community service is considered in faculty evaluation as a low third after the conventional, traditional, or principal duties of teaching and research are considered, (2) the consideration given to community service is highly subjective and often informal, (3) the continuing education administrator has little or no involvement in the faculty evaluation process, (4) the teaching of credit continuing education courses is not considered community service since such teaching is part of the regularly assigned academic load, (5) the teaching of non-credit courses was considered community service but viewed as less important than credit teaching, (6) the teaching of non-credit courses is regarded as a way to increase income, and (7) few full-time faculty members are actively involved in continuing education teaching.
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CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICE AS A COMPONENT OF FACULTY EVALUATION

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CONTINUING EDUCATION SERVICE AS A COMPONENT OF FACULTY EVALUATION

ABSTRACT

This paper will report the findings of a survey which assesses whether institutions of higher education are recognizing the value of contributions made by their faculty who are teaching in adult, continuing education, and extension programs. Specifically, the paper will present data gathered from over 170 private and public universities and colleges located in 44 states, on how the administration evaluates faculty community service in considering academic promotion, reappointment, and tenure. I sent out a questionnaire to members of the National University Extension Association and the Association for Continuing Higher Education. After eliminating duplication, we sent out about 360 questionnaires, and received about 50% response.

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT I WANTED TO LEARN

For ten years or more, continuing education administrators have been congratulating each other and reminding other university administrators that we "stand on the threshold of a lifelong learning society."¹ Recently, the Wall Street Journal recognized the trend and spoke of the "graying of our campuses," noting that many post-secondary institutions, facing economic plight, had looked to non-traditional age-groups to fill vacant spots in the classroom. We call these new students, the "new majority"; we speak nobly of our mission to expand the university beyond its ivied walls; and our annual reports are filled with florid passages suggesting that inter-collegiate shuffleboard ought perhaps to replace football, and that

intramural buildings had better stock up on Geritol.

There is just enough reality to support these sanguine assessments. The State University of New York reports that 48.9% of their students are drawn from non-traditional college age groups, and we know that for the academic year 1973-74 the college-going population over 21 years of age increased by a startling 81.1% over that of the previous year. Where once the average American found out he or she could afford to wait four years to start a career, we now find that same American, full in pursuit of that career, taking time off to develop new skills, get some sort of additional certification, or learn how to grow houseplants at his friendly, local university. It is big business, and just about everyone is in on the act.

It is also public service, and if it were not, I suggest that many of us would not have chosen it for a career. The one thing more likely than a government grant to excite the blood of a continuing education administrator is the thought of the huddled masses outside the university hungering for learning. We specialize in designing "delivery systems" to satisfy "felt needs" with "non-traditional modes of educational experience." Nobody in the university hierarchy disagrees that our mission is a worthy one; the publics we serve keep coming; offerings become more and more creative; the faculty gets paid; and the only crisis we experience that is not budget related occurs when seventy-five people show up for a course and find the campus closed. I would like to end this paper here, but it just is not possible.

I have recently become concerned that continuing education administrators are living in what amounts to a fool's paradise. The occasion for that concern was a new system of faculty evaluation

which was being developed at Trinity University here in San Antonio, to which I came two years ago to begin a program in continuing education. Aware that the committee studying the issue was seeking recommendations, I offered to provide information on the inevitable category of "public service" which appears in most formal statements on how faculty members are to be judged for tenure, promotion, salary increases, and reappointment. It is not a long story: I was ignored, and the committee proceeded to draft what to me is a remarkable definition of the continuing education component of community service. To render public service, a faculty member "performs educational service activities by providing leadership and consultative assistance (conferences, workshops)." That is it -- faculty members busily searching for criteria by which they will be judged are sure to stop at that sentence and remark how important continuing education activities are to their future, to be impressed with the need for developing continuing education offerings, and to race across campus to the continuing education office pleading for an opportunity to do something significant.

Faculty members are like other people: they tend to do something for which they will receive a reward, and the rewards of academe are decidedly those of committees and administrators who pass on the status of service sellers in a buyer's market. Thirty-six years ago, it was no exaggeration for Logan Wilson to say that "The most critical problem confronted in the social organization of any university is the proper evaluation of faculty services, and giving due recognition through the impartial assignment of status."² Recalling that statement, I faced an inevitable choice: either community service should be recognized in the granting of status within

the university, or it must be sold honestly to potential faculty as a good way to make a buck. I decided to find out how things were done elsewhere, so I repaired to the literature and did my own survey.

I have seen enough of the disparity between theory and practice that my survey was not intended to compile yet another testimonial to the importance of continuing education. I directed it at continuing education administrators on the assumption that if continuing education was an important part of faculty evaluation, they would be regularly called upon to supply information on the number and the success of programs offered by faculty. The measure of how important faculty participation in continuing education programs is to a general evaluation of that faculty member's worth is perhaps the most significant factor in determining how universities view their community service program -- if reward for such participation remains only monetary, then it is an inevitable assumption that continuing education is only an adjunct to the real business of a university, tolerable for cosmetic reasons, lip service to its public commitment.

I also wanted to know what percentage of each university's faculty regularly participated in continuing education programs -- how many thought enough of the reward system to use it. My own experience at two universities had forewarned me that it would not be many. Faculty members are willing to be convinced to teach non-credit programs; and once convinced they often find it a rewarding professional experience. It is certain, however, that if the teaching of continuing education programs were in any way a prerequisite for the granting of tenure, reappointment to the university, promotion in rank, or even a measure used in determining salary increases, there

would be a large portion of the faculty which proposed programs creative enough and attractive enough to the public to warrant their being offered.

I did not concern myself in this survey with faculty evaluation documents; and I did not seek hard data: I wanted impressions, estimates, and frank opinions. I wanted other continuing education administrators to share their actual experience translating rhetoric into programs using resident faculty. Before I offer these assessments, however, I believe that a brief overview of the literature of faculty evaluation, and the place of community service education in it, should adumbrate every conclusion that my survey suggests we should draw.

II. FACULTY EVALUATION: IS PUBLIC SERVICE IMPORTANT?

The mere mention of faculty evaluation draws opposition in the academic community, and many universities have recently renewed study of their particular evaluation systems. The subject is fraught with controversy. Since some form of faculty evaluation is traditionally used to reappoint, promote, increase salary or grant tenure to a faculty member, the debate centers less on whether evaluation should exist at all, but concentrates rather on what should be evaluated, and how the process should take place.

Even a cursory overview of the literature published during the last decade demonstrates the extent of the debate. Should effective teaching be of primary importance, and if so, who is to judge what good teaching is? Are students best equipped to evaluate a teacher's ability, or should the instructor be judged by peers, department chairpersons, deans, or other experts in the field? Should a faculty member's value be assessed through the list of publications,

research projects, grants, or other scholarly activities produced annually? In addition to teaching and research, there is a third category often mentioned as part of faculty evaluation which is variously termed public service, community service, service to the university, or professional service. This "service" category's definition is even more nebulous and confused than those defining teaching or research, and is applied differently not only at each institution, but may differ from department to department.

Although many studies on the general category of faculty evaluation have been published, very little research regarding faculty public service or continuing education activity as a sub-category of public service has been conducted. In his comprehensive study Handbook of Academic Evaluation, Paul Dressel addresses the question under "external service"; he is one of the few researchers who includes on- and off- campus teaching of credit and non-credit courses as a part of faculty evaluation. But although Dressel advocates faculty involvement in continuing education activities ("Public service is a professional responsibility; time should be assigned to it, and the service should be evaluated"³), he does not propose a plan by which such activities can be planned, carried out, and integrated into the faculty evaluation system. In "Assessing Faculty's Community Service," authors Haberman and Quinn, among the very few continuing education professionals who have explored the issue, suggest some very useful but broad guidelines for judging community service in general.⁴ The question of how to evaluate the teaching of continuing education programs, however, tends to be ignored in this article.

More common is the inclusion of an undefined category entitled

"public service" in a study of faculty evaluation in general. Peter Seldin, in his book How Colleges Evaluate Professors, a study of how academic deans of liberal arts colleges evaluate faculty performance, reports that 84.2% of deans queried consider public service of minor or no importance when reviewing faculty performance.⁵ A comprehensive study, entitled How Universities Evaluate Faculty Performance: A Survey of Department Heads was conducted by John A. Centra, and published in 1977.⁶ The results of Centra's survey are devastating to those who believe that public service in general and continuing education activity in particular should be recognized and rewarded by institutions of higher education. Of those chairmen surveyed 2% stated that public or community service was an "extremely important" factor in evaluating faculty members, while an average of 34% said it was not a factor at all (p. 7). Even more reflective of current academic opinion was the "Ranking of Current and Preferred Criteria for Evaluating Faculty for Promotion, Salary Increase, or Tenure" in the same study. Of a possible 13 categories to be considered, public or community service was ranked eleventh, with only "competing job offers" and "consultation (government, business, etc.)" listed as less important criteria (p. 8).

Perhaps more indicative of how public service is viewed in higher education is the article of a faculty member who did not set out to describe the faculty evaluation system at her institution. In an article in the February, 1978 issue of Change, entitled "How to Save Your Own Career," Jane Nitsche, a newly tenured associate professor at Rice University, offers advice on how recently appointed faculty members can secure promotion and tenure in a shrinking academic job market.⁷ It is of interest to note how she views the

service component of faculty evaluation. She states: "Specific criteria used to evaluate candidates at many universities center on three major areas -- university service, teaching effectiveness, and publication . . . Though university service ranks least in importance, ask your chairman to recommend you for an appointment; be explicit about which committees interest you most" (p. 41). Obviously, service here means only academic committee membership; service is directed only inward into the university itself; service rendered to the community-at-large is never even considered.

III. THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

I will now report to you the results of the survey I conducted: it is an attempt to determine, by admittedly subjective standards, how well the professional activity in continuing education has been integrated in the reward system. I have included the following topics: Distinctions between public and private institutions; distinctions made between credit and non-credit courses; percentage of resident faculty providing continuing education service; the extent to which extra remuneration vitiates other rewards; and, an overview of how some major universities view their faculty's involvement in continuing education teaching.

After eliminating the responses from institutions that had no significant continuing education programs, 169 questionnaire replies have been tabulated. Forty-eight responses represent private post-secondary institutions; 121 came from public universities. One hundred fifty-six institutions (private and public) from 44 states are actually represented (at some universities several persons received questionnaires and responded to the survey).

It is noteworthy that although responses represent all but the

least populous states, no discernible pattern can be drawn geographically. In areas where continuing education has a long history, such as on the east and west coasts, no more recognition appears to be given to community service and for continuing education, than for example, in the Southwest, where most continuing education programs are relative newcomers. Land grant institutions, which by law must provide continuing education under their cooperative extension branch, do not have uniform policies regarding community service, at least not as it concerns their full-time faculty members.

No significant conclusions can be drawn concerning whether universities are located in large urban or rural areas. While urban universities might be able to offer more community services to its surrounding populations, their faculties are not more highly rewarded for community service than those who live in small towns. There is even discrepancy in multiple answers received from the same institution. The University of Nebraska, for example, sent in two responses, taking contrasting views on their university's policies regarding community service on all major points. The same is true for multiple responses received from four other major institutions (Ohio State University, University of Tennessee at Nashville, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Texas A & M University). It appears, then, that even continuing education administrators at the same university are confused on the issue of community service.

IV. SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS: COMMUNITY SERVICE EVALUATION

1. In your institution's faculty evaluation, is community service considered for reappointment, promotion, and tenure?

Of the public institutions, 60% responded positively to this

question, while private universities were split 50-50 (see Table I).

The fact that private institutions consider community service as a less important function than do public universities may be explained in that the public institution, supported by public funds, is charged with the mission of purveying and disseminating knowledge to the population at large, regardless of age or financial status. Of course, the written goals of a university and the fulfillment of these goals may be at variance. One response summarizes many which stated these sentiments: "Theoretically, community service is part of the mission of the university, but in actual practice in some schools performing community service is considered a detriment because it utilizes research time. Peer pressure and the more research oriented schools and colleges also tend to discourage these activities." The most frequent comment when community service was at all considered was that it carried much less weight than teaching or research. Another repeated comment indicated that although outstanding community service might help a faculty member gain promotion or tenure, non-performance in this area would not detract from his or her chances. Many others reported that no overall community service evaluation exists at their institutions, but that colleges and/or departments may each have their own procedure.

The conclusions that may be drawn in general are the following: 1) community service is considered at the majority of universities in faculty evaluation, it is considered a low third after the "conventional," "traditional," or "principal" duties of teaching and research; and, 2) consideration given to community service is highly subjective, often informal, or minimal.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the general comments

TABLE I

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES IN PERCENTAGES

		PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS		PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	
		Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
1.	Is community service considered in faculty evaluation?	50	50	60	40
2.	Is credit continuing education teaching part of community service?	30	70	53	47
3.	Is non-credit continuing education teaching part of community service?	39	61	61	39
4.	Is non-credit continuing education service viewed as:				
a.	community service	51	49	73	27
b.	university service	58	42	48	52
c.	professional enrichment	15	85	30	70
d.	consulting	5	95	17	83
e.	a way to earn more income	68	32	73	27
f.	COMPOSITE	39.4	60.46	48.2	51.8

is that the continuing education administrator has little or no involvement in the evaluation process. A few institutions, usually those whose continuing education administrator is at the vice-presidential level, do take the trouble to report all community service under their administration to the president or tenure committee, but most commonly, community service activities are compiled by individual faculty members and presented to their chairmen. As a consequence, only those faculty whose chairman has an abiding interest in community service are rewarded for their efforts.

V. SPECIFIC RESPONSES: CREDIT CONTINUING EDUCATION

2. Does your institution consider the teaching of credit courses (evening, weekend, or extension) as part of the community service component of faculty evaluation?

Forty-seven percent of public and 70% of private institutions answered negatively. Again these figures do not tell the entire story. As before, answers often went beyond a "yes" or "no," and many respondents added commentary. A large number of institutions do not consider the teaching of credit continuing education courses as community service, as most often such teaching is part of the regularly assigned academic load. Comments often reflected the opinion voiced in a recent article in Adult Leadership which states: "... teaching does not become transformed into community service because the teaching occurs in the evening or off campus. The quality of teaching should be judged by peers and students on the same criteria wherever it occurs."⁸ In addition, sometimes continuing education credit courses were assigned as an overload, and the faculty's additional remuneration for this work automatically disqualified it as community service. As one dean of continuing educa-

tion wrote: "Teaching continuing education courses generates its own reward -- money -- and little or no account is taken of it in assessing faculty performance." Other responses reflected a prejudice against teaching extension credit courses: "Such teaching is not judged on an equal basis with primary duties." Inherent in this statement is the implication that teaching "normal" or "real" students is somehow superior to teaching students at different locations or outside the traditional age group.

It should be noted that two respondents indicated that they appoint their own faculty and therefore conduct their own evaluation. One of these programs employs only part-time professors, and uses student questionnaires to decide whether the faculty member is to be continued. This part-time professor does not obtain faculty rank and cannot be promoted or tenured. The other continuing education division that reported appointing its own faculty has the power to retain full-time faculty, with all rights and privileges extended to "regular" faculty, including promotion or tenure, a continuing education faculty member must perform duties similar to those normally expected from other faculty members at the university (teaching, research, advising, university service, community service), but the rules are more flexible to allow for the diversity demanded from continuing educators.

VI. SPECIFIC RESPONSES: NON-CREDIT

3. Does your institution consider the teaching of non-credit courses as part of the community service component in faculty evaluation?

Among the private institutions, only 39% indicated that they considered non-credit teaching a factor in faculty evaluation.

Sixty-one percent of public universities indicated that non-credit

teaching was considered community service, although as with private institutions, non-credit service was viewed as less important than credit teaching. As one dean put it: "Teaching non-credit continuing education courses is the equivalent to playing nine holes of golf." Lack of recognition of non-credit teaching may lie in the fact that many universities do not receive financial support for non-credit courses as they do not add to full-time equivalents. As many institutions continue to face deficits and declining enrollments, efforts have concentrated on recruiting adults into degree programs.

4. Five answers were possible to the fourth question, which attempted to determine how non-credit continuing education teaching was considered generally at each institution. It should be pointed out first that the majority of respondents consider non-credit continuing education activity more likely than credit continuing education to be considered as community service, yet non-credit teaching receives little status or reward at most institutions. Seventy-three percent of the public and 51% of the private institutions queried however, responded that non-credit continuing education teaching was considered community service. The discrepancy between this response and the one given to the previous question demonstrates that although non-credit continuing education teaching may be considered community service, it therefore does not necessarily become part of the faculty evaluation process.

Less than half of public institutions view non-credit continuing education teaching as service to the university (48%), while 58% of private institutions responded affirmatively. Again, the definition of "university service" is unclear. Although it might be argued that extending the university's expertise into the community represents

a service to the institution and enhances its reputation, generally university service consists of community membership, directing theses and dissertations, or other duties inside the regular academic structure.

Rarely is non-credit continuing education regarded as a source of professional refreshment. This question was included in the survey because many instructors newly introduced to adult students enjoy either the different and sometimes more sophisticated method of teaching, or are stimulated by the responsiveness of a more mature audience. In my experience, many faculty members who might have initially been reluctant to teach continuing education courses, became enthusiastic converts and have requested to teach additional programs. However, only 30% of public and 15% of private institutions share this opinion.

Is non-credit continuing education teaching viewed as consulting? Resoundingly, both public (83%) and private institutions (85%) answered this question negatively. Few people commented on this question, but it was made clear that consulting is held in low esteem, as evidenced by the Centra study quoted above.

Is non-credit continuing education regarded as a way to increase income? Seventy-three percent of public and 68% of private institutions agree that it is. The question of money emerged often in this survey. Although 66% of both public and private universities state that "a faculty member is NOT less likely to receive recognition for non-credit continuing education teaching because a stipend is usually involved" (in answer to question 6 of the survey), approximately 30% of universities have a firm policy that no money may be received for performing any community service, which includes continuing edu-

cation teaching. Many believe that the extra stipend received is sufficient reward in and of itself. Few recognize, however, that when faculty teach their so-called regular courses, their efforts are rewarded financially also, and that few professors would agree to teach if their salaries were no longer paid.

VII. PERCENTAGE OF FACULTY INVOLVED IN CONTINUING EDUCATION TEACHING

5. Approximately what percentage of your faculty teach non-credit continuing education courses?

The answers to this question are charted below and may provide some insight as to why continuing education activities are held in such low esteem:

TABLE II
Percentage of Faculty Involved in
Non-Credit Continuing Education Teaching

	Private	Public
1-9%	49%	25%
10%	35%	51%
11-25%	11.5%	18%
over 25%	4.5%	6%

It is obvious from these figures that in the non-credit area few full-time faculty are actively involved. The question that arises immediately then is the following: Is continuing education teaching given little recognition and reward because few faculty are involved, or are few faculty involved because little recognition is given? It is the old question of the chicken and the egg, and cannot be answered easily. I assert that there is truth in both questions, and continuing education administrators must first solve the problem of rewards, and that then more faculty will be interested in contributing their services to non-traditional programming.

VIII. HOW IS COMMUNITY SERVICE EVALUATED AT YOUR INSTITUTION?

The final question of the survey asked for a brief description of the community service component of faculty evaluation at each institution. Since this question was open-ended, no actual tabulation can be given, but answers fell into these general categories:

- Community service is not evaluated at all at our institution.
- Community service is one of a number of factors (usually from three to seven) considered in our faculty evaluation.
- Community service is judged subjectively.
- Community service is viewed differently from department to department; professional schools are more apt to view it as important.
- We are a research oriented and/or graduate institution, and faculty get rewarded primarily for significant publication.

One final statement summarizes many of the negative opinions expressed:

"Theoretically, continuing education activity is to be considered in matters of promotion, reappointment, and tenure. Practically such activity remains a very minor consideration relative to that given to publication, degrees, and other traditional academic barometers. In other words, traditional still remains synonymous with more acceptable."

Yet not all answers were negative. A small number (less than 10%) wrote that community service is judged on the same level as teaching and research or publication.

Middle Tennessee State University includes continuing education teaching programs for occupational improvement, personal growth, solving community problems, and aiding business and industry as part of its faculty evaluation statement, and actively encourages faculty to participate. East Stroudsburg State College reports that "We like to see faculty take part in any type of community program according to their interests. It is an opportunity to provide leadership,

get to know townsfolk and to become a true part of the community. Community service is evaluated when one is being considered for promotion and tenure."

The University of Missouri at Kansas City allows a faculty member with few publications to offset that deficiency with extensive community service activities. Purdue, the University of Georgia, Western Michigan, and others have all developed faculty evaluation systems which include both public service and continuing education activity as categories worthy of analysis and reward. Their views can perhaps be best summarized in this statement published in Rutgers University's Public Service Policy Statement: "The responsibility of members of the university community of a major institution of higher education is not only to do research and to teach, but also to provide a variety of services to the community at large It is important that appropriate recognition and reward be given to the individual performing community service and that his/her time in the individual or institutional endeavor be evaluated in the same spirit and given the same weight as his/her research and teaching."

At this point in a survey report, conclusions are called for, and here they seem pretty obvious. No matter how formal our criteria in academe, our respect for subjective judgments in professional matters remains dominant; no matter how we extol the virtues of community service education, we stand in awe of a published paper and shrug at a four-week course for adults on the same subject; no matter how many presidents take the podium to talk lifelong learning, department heads will still consider continuing education self-service at evaluation time, and administrators will still sanction those judgments. Ten percent of our faculties will know the challenge of a course taken by adults, and 90% will think the 10% odd. Outside

consultants will assume the leadership role of educating the community, and traditional faculty will wonder whether continuing education is really not more than a gimmick. We will win every battle in our quest for respectability, and lose the war of respect within our institutions.

What I believe is most significant about this informal survey is never stated. It reveals a certain duality in our conception of our roles within the institution. We thrive on meetings like this, during which one continuing education administrator can speak to another soothingly of our mission in terms too sublime to admit disagreement; then we go home as tired missionaries, true believers too satisfied with ourselves to raise fundamental questions about what we are with the very people we need to convince. Perhaps we ought to ask ourselves, our faculties, and our boards whether we are not merely there to provide some extra cash for our resident experts and some increased certification and personal satisfaction for our public. Value for value. Then we can measure faculty on the basis of how many times the turnstiles turn. The prospect is surely not dear to us, but it should make us wonder at the price we are paying for not asking the fundamental question: Does the teaching of a continuing education course demonstrate something significant about a faculty member's worth to his or her institution? When you raise that question, do not take "yes" for an answer; ask exactly "what"?

FOOTNOTES

1. Rosalind Loring, "President's Letter," Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years (September, 1977), p. 11.
2. Logan Wilson, The Academic Man, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 112.
3. Paul L. Dressel, Handbook of Academic Evaluation (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976), p. 367.
4. Martin Haberman and Lois Quinn, "Assessing Faculty's Community Service," Adult Leadership 25 (January, 1977), pp. 140, 150.
5. Peter Seldin, How Colleges Evaluate Professors (Croton-on-Hudson, New York: Blythe-Pennington, Ltd., 1975), p. 141.
6. John A. Centra, How Universities Evaluate Faculty Performance: A Survey of Department Heads (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1977).
7. Jane Chance Nitzche, "How to Save Your Own Career," Change 10 (February, 1978), pp. 40-43.
8. Haberman, op cit, p. 140.